

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. In a method for treating cytological or histological specimens in an automatic stainer, the specimens being delivered on object carriers and in object carrier magazines
5 by means of a transport device to various processing stations containing reagents, inserted therein, and treated in accordance with a selectable treatment program, the improvement comprising the steps of:
automatically monitoring said reagents of said processing stations, and taking into consideration definable parameters in said monitoring.
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2. The improvement as defined in Claim 1, wherein the type of reagent contained in a processing station is defined as a parameter and allocated to the respective processing station.
- 15 3. The improvement as defined in Claim 1, wherein a working life limit of the reagent contained in a processing station is defined as a parameter and allocated to the respective processing station.
4. The improvement as defined in Claim 3, wherein for definition of said working life
20 limit, an upper limit value and a warning threshold value are defined as parameters and allocated to said respective processing station.
5. The improvement as defined in Claim 3, wherein said working life limit is selected from a predefined library that can be added to.
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6. The improvement as defined in Claim 3, wherein an absolute working life of the reagent contained in a processing station in terms of days since the last reagent change is defined as a parameter and allocated to the respective processing station.

7. The improvement as defined in Claim 6, wherein after a change of reagents, the number of working processes that have taken place in the respective processing station is counted, and from that said working life is calculated.
- 5 8. The improvement as defined in Claim 1, wherein said step of monitoring comprises monitoring the physical composition and fill level of the reagent contained in a respective processing station.
- 10 9. The improvement as defined in Claim 1, further comprising the step of displaying said definable parameters and data detected from said monitoring.
10. The improvement as defined in Claim 9, wherein data calculated from said monitoring are also displayed.
- 15 11. The improvement according to Claim 9, wherein said definable parameters and data detected from said monitoring are graphically displayed.
12. The improvement according to Claim 11, wherein said processing stations are represented by corresponding symbols in an overview graphical depiction.
- 20 13. The improvement as defined in Claim 12, wherein said symbols are arranged in said graphical depiction in a manner analogous to the actual physical arrangement of said processing stations.
- 25 14. The improvement as defined in Claim 12, wherein a working life limit of a reagent contained in a processing station is one of said definable parameters, and said working life limit is displayed in an analog representation linked with a corresponding processing station symbol in said overview graphical depiction.

15. The improvement as defined in Claim 14, wherein said analog representation is a bar graph.

16. The improvement as defined in Claim 11, wherein the fill level of a reagent
5 contained in a processing station is monitored, and said fill level is displayed in an analog representation linked with a corresponding processing station symbol in said overview graphical depiction.

17. The improvement as defined in Claim 16, wherein said analog representation is a
10 bar graph.

18. The improvement as defined in Claim 9, wherein further parameters and data relevant to processing are displayed.

19. The improvement as defined in Claim 18, wherein said further parameters and data
15 include the loading status of a processing station.

20. The improvement as defined in Claim 12, wherein said definable parameters and data detected from said monitoring are graphically displayed for a specific processing
20 station by directly touching a corresponding processing station symbol in said overview graphical depiction.

21. The improvement as defined in Claim 3, further comprising the step of providing an indication when said working life limit of said reagent at a processing station is exceeded.
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22. The improvement as defined in Claim 21, wherein said indication includes a visual indication.

23. The improvement as defined in Claim 21, wherein said indication includes an acoustic indication.

24. The improvement as defined in Claim 8, further comprising the step of
5 automatically refilling said processing stations with reagents based on data obtained through said step of monitoring.